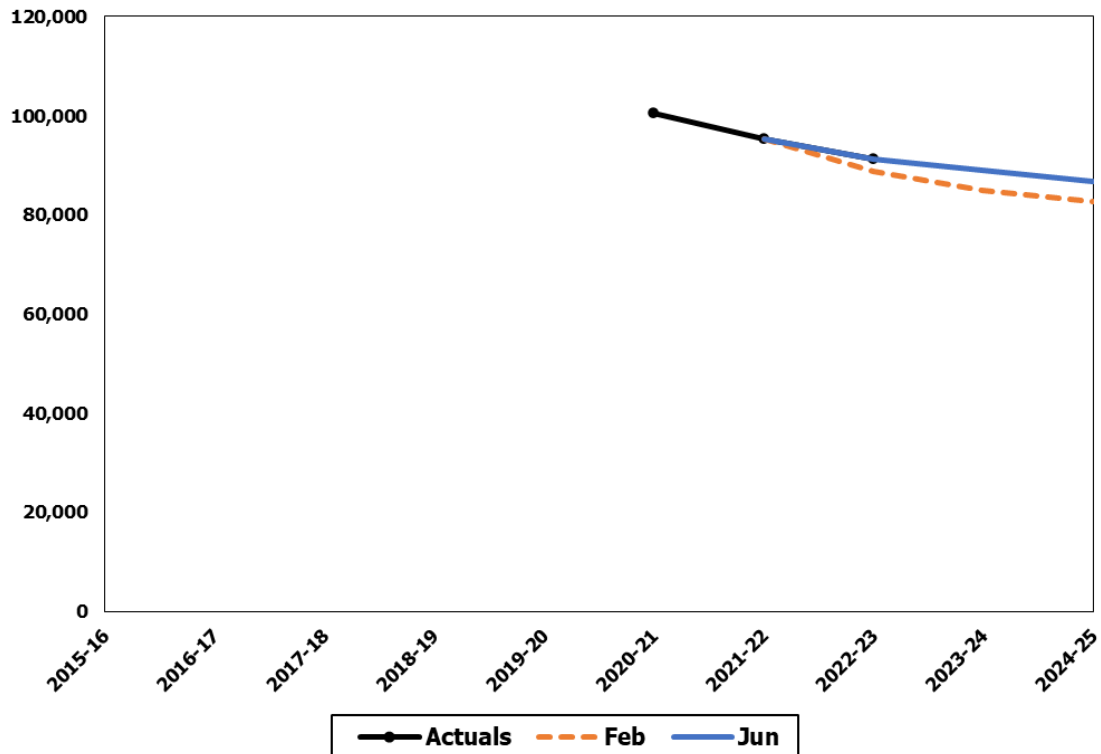


Washington College Grant

Caseload Forecast Council
June 14, 2023

Washington College Grant Enrollment (Academic Year Headcount)



Starting in the 2020-21 academic year, the Washington College Grant (WCG) provides all eligible students with financial aid awards based on public tuition rates. WCG can be used at public and private participating institutions of higher education in Washington State. A grant will also be offered to certain registered apprentices. The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) administers the WCG. This is a new caseload under HB 2158, passed during the 2019 legislative session. Previously, the program was not an entitlement.

Forecast Comparisons (Academic Year Averages)

Academic Year	Feb-23 Forecast	Jun-23 Forecast	Feb to Jun Difference	Percent Difference
2022-23	88,769	91,283	2,514	2.8%
2023-24	84,942	88,862	3,920	4.6%
2024-25	82,632	86,701	4,069	4.9%

Compared to February, the June 2023 forecast is, on average, 2,514 cases or 2.9 percent higher for the 2022-23 year and 3,994 cases or 4.8 percent higher for the 2023-25 Biennium.

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Tracking the Current Forecast

Academic Year	Feb-23		Variance	Percent
	Forecast	Actual		Variance
2022-23	88,769	91,283	2,514	2.8%

Actuals for the 2022-23 academic year are tracking 2.8 percent higher than the February forecast, due to fall to spring increases from the Community and Technical College sector. WCG data updates only occur three times per year. February and June forecasts lag adjust data to account for students delaying enrollment until spring and/or summer term. Final year data is available with the November forecast cycle.

Academic Year Caseload Change

		Academic Year	Caseload	Change from Prior Year	Percent Change
Actual		2015-16			
		2016-17			
		2017-18			
		2018-19			
		2019-20			
		2020-21	100,427		
		2021-22	95,352	-5,075	-5.1%
Forecast		2022-23	91,283	-4,069	-4.3%
		2023-24	88,862	-2,421	-2.7%
		2024-25	86,701	-2,161	-2.4%

The WCG became an entitlement during the 2020-21 year when COVID-19 impacted demand for higher education. The 2021-22 year followed with a significantly improved labor market, which also lowered demand for higher education, and enrollment continued to decline another 5.1 percent. The 2022-23 year began with a tight job market as well as with high inflation, increasing the opportunity cost of attending college. During the year, enrollment picked at the Community and Technical Colleges. Additionally, FAFSA filings by younger students from low-income families indicate interest in higher education is starting to rebound. As a result, WCG enrollment is forecasted to fall only 2.7 percent in the 2023-24 year, followed by 2.4 percent decline in the 2024-25 year.

Apprenticeships

The WCG forecast assumes increased enrollment for registered apprenticeships. The June 2023 forecast for WCG apprenticeships is set at 204 for 2022-23, then 304 for 2023-24, and 404 for 2024-25.

Risks to the Forecast

Risks to the WCG forecast are high, as it is a new forecast. Further shifts in the economy (labor market, inflation) could also impact the forecast. The demand for higher education financial aid is often cyclical with the labor market—enrollment often declines when demand for labor is strong.

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